



WASHINGTON  LEGISLATORS

Back to School

Do You Trust Our Government?

Please circle your answers.

First, we would like to know something about you.

1) What state are you from? _____

2) What is the best description of your position?

Legislator
Legislative Staff
Other government employee
Lobbyist
News Media
Educator
Student
General Public
Academic Political Scientist

3) How old are you?

Under 18
18-34
35-49
50-64
65 or over

4) Gender: Male Female

5) Did you vote in the last general election? Yes No

Continued...

6) On a scale of 1 to 5, how knowledgeable would you say you are about government and public affairs?

- 1 — Not very knowledgeable
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 — Very knowledgeable

7) On a scale of 1 to 5, how involved would you say you are in government, your community or public affairs?

- 1 — Not very involved
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 — Very involved

Now answer all of the following questions to gauge your level of trust in representative democracy.

8) Following are six pairs of differing views about representative democracy. Please circle the number that most closely matches your level of agreement with one or the other of these statements. Numbers 2-6 represent "in-between" degrees of agreement.

8a) 1 — Most legislators act unethically and are out for themselves.

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

7 — Most legislators are out to promote the public welfare as they and their constituents see it.

8b) 1 — Legislators don't care what regular people think.

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

7 — Legislators care deeply about what their constituents want.

- 8c) 1 — Americans agree on what is right and necessary, so the legislature should just pass the laws that the people want.
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 — People disagree on most issues except at a general level, and the legislature must resolve the clash of values and interests.
- 8d) 1 — Legislators are the servants of special interests that look out for themselves, not the will of the regular people. A few big interests run the government.
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 — There is an organized interest for almost every conceivable policy interest that anyone might have. The number and diversity of organized interests ensure that all sides of an issue are heard but not that any one group comes out ahead.
- 8e) 1 — The lawmaking process doesn't work well because of politics, unprincipled deal making and needless conflict.
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 — Making laws is a contentious process because it takes in so many competing values, interests and constituencies.
- 8f) 1 — Politicians are not accountable for their actions.
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 — Politicians, who must run for office every two or four years, are as accountable as anyone can be.